prices of foodgrains for below poverty line (BPL) and the above poverty line (APL) sections of the population are not altogether ruled out.

(b) Under the guidelines for implementation of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) the States and the Union Territories have been asked to draw up inspection schedules for District Taluk level officers right from Collector District Magistrate to the Inspector of Supplies, take steps to introduce greater measure of transparency in the functioning of PDS constitute Vigilance Committees at various levels and to hold their regular meetings. A model Citizens Charter for TPDS has been prepared and circulated to the State/UTs for adoption. The State UTs have also been impressed upon to take such measures as may be necessary to curb diversion of PDS commodities including drives to week out bogus ration cards.

Selection of supplier by NCCF

1133. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the National Consumer Cooperative Federation (NCCF) has appointed more than one supplier for supply of the same item;

(b) if so, how far is that practice fair and lawful;

(c) whether there is no transparency in the affairs of NCCF as the same have been denying meaningful information such as details of items procured from local suppliers, their purchase rates, rates of NCCF to Government departments,

etc; and

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government and the steps taken to direct NCCF to make public the information without further delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) and (b) According to the information furnished by the NCCF, they procure their requirement of supplies from their registered suppliers. They obtain supply of some of the items from more than one supplier depending upon their business requirements. This practice is considered fairly reasonable, and practical.

(c) and (d) The operations of the NCCF are transparent and they furnish information with regard to purchases from local suppliers and others to the extent possible. The NCCF is an autonomous cooperative organisation having its own Board of Directors to decide about their business and administrative matters. Govt. of India do not interfere in such matters.

Amendment of Essential Commodities Act, 1955

1134. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Govern ment have approved amendment of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955;

(b) if so, what are the proposed amendments;

(c) the reasons and objectives thereof; and

(d) whether due care has been taken in the amendment so that the artificial situation of shortage is not created by traders, businessmen as was created in respect of onions and potatoes in the recent past for taking political advantage and to affect the political process of Assembly Elections?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. On the basis of the report of the Group of officers under the chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary constituted as per decision taken in the meeting of the Chief Minister of States/UTs, held on 27.11.98 under the chairmanship of the Prime